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SUBJECT: COMMITTEE TO ADDRESS SUNNI HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS ?

REF: BAGHDAD 328

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT S. FORD FOR
REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (C) SUMMARY. On February 7 Deputy Prime Minister Abid Mutlaq Hamud al-Jabburi told us that Prime Minister Jafari had given him oral instructions to form an investigative committee to address human rights issues and complaints lodged against the Iraqi security forces. The Prime Minister referred to this committee when he tried to placate angry Sunni Arab leaders over lunch at the American Ambassador's on February 4 (ref). As of 13 February, however, the Prime Minister had not give Jaburi formal instructions. The idea has some merit if it moves forward. An active investigation led by a credible Sunni Arab could help address Sunni Arab concerns about human rights violations that are likely to impede government formation talks. END SUMMARY

HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLAINTS

12. (C) The Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Abid Mutlaq al-Jabburi, told PolCouns February 7 that he continues to receive complaints of Iraqi government human rights violations from many organizations, including the Iraqi Islamic Party, the head of the Sunni Waqf, and others in the Sunni Arab Tawafuq coalitions. The majority of these complaints are vague and overly general and do not provide enough detail to support an investigation. The Deputy Prime Minister has asked each of these groups to provide further details to enable an investigation (to date, only the Iraqi Islamic Party has followed-up.)

A NEW COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ?

13. (C) Jaburi told us February 7 that Prime Minister Jafari on February 3 had given him oral instructions to form an investigative committee to look into the allegations of abuses by government forces. The committee would include National Security Advisor Muwafaq Rubai'e and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Safi. Jaburi wanted a committee made up of members from the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Human Rights, and representatives from the Iraqi cabinet, to look into complaints against the various security forces and the associated ministries. Jabburi told us that he sent on February 7 a formal request for written authorization to the Prime Minister. On February 13 he reported that the Prime Minister still had not responded.

14. (C) The Jaburi committee would investigate each complaint received by Jaburi's office. As Deputy Prime

Minister al-Jabburi sees it, the participation of the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Human Rights is essential to provide the technical expertise. This committee might also request technical assistance from the United States Government, if required. Jaburi commented that criminal investigation experts would be very useful. However, he first wanted to form the Iraqi committee itself before seeking any foreign assistance.

¶5. (C) On February 13 Jaburi's top aide told us that Jaburi had convened Rubai'e and Safi on February 8. They sent an official request to the Interior Minister to provide copies of all arrest and detention orders on February 8 but so far they have had no response from the Interior Ministry.

¶6. (C) COMMENT. Jaburi was elected to parliament from Kirkuk from the Sunni Arab Tawafuq List and has his own standing as a retired Iraqi Army general officer. A Sunni Arab-led investigation, if ultimately approved, might help address Sunni Arab concerns about stories of abuses by security forces. As we saw at the February 4 lunch, the emotions about alleged human rights abuses are very high and will certainly rise to the surface during the government formation talks. END COMMENT.

KHALILZAD